



[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2014-1043; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-079-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: We propose to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all Airbus Model A330-200, A330-200 Freighter, and A330-300 series airplanes; and Model A340-200 and A340-300 series airplanes. This proposed AD was prompted by reports of cracked support strut body ends at a certain frame location of the trimmable horizontal stabilizer (THS). This proposed AD would require repetitive inspections for cracking of the strut ends of the THS support located at a certain frame in the tail cone, and replacement if necessary; and reinstallation or installation of reinforcing clamps on certain strut ends. We are proposing this AD to detect and correct cracked support strut body ends of the THS, which could lead to the loss of all four THS support struts and which would make the remaining structure unable to carry limit loads, resulting in the loss of the horizontal tail plane.

DATES: We must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may send comments, using the procedures found in 14 CFR 11.43 and 11.45, by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- Fax: 202-493-2251.
- Mail: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590.
- Hand Delivery: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For service information identified in this proposed AD, contact Airbus SAS, Airworthiness Office – EAL, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax +33 5 61 93 45 80; email airworthiness.A330-A340@airbus.com; Internet <http://www.airbus.com>. You may view this referenced service information at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 425-227-1221.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2014-1043; or in person at the Docket

Management Facility between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this proposed AD, the regulatory evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for the Docket Operations office (telephone 800-647-5527) is in the ADDRESSES section. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Vladimir Ulyanov, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; telephone 425-227-1138; fax 425-227-1149.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

We invite you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposed AD. Send your comments to an address listed under the ADDRESSES section. Include “Docket No. FAA-2014-1043; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-079-AD” at the beginning of your comments. We specifically invite comments on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of this proposed AD. We will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this proposed AD based on those comments.

We will post all comments we receive, without change, to <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information you provide. We will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact we receive about this proposed AD.

Discussion

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA Airworthiness Directive 2014-0068, dated March 18, 2014 (referred to after this as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or “the MCAI”), to correct an unsafe condition on all Airbus Model A330-200, A330-200 Freighter, and A330-300 series airplanes; and Model A340-200 and A340-300 series airplanes. The MCAI states:

During scheduled maintenance on A330 aeroplanes, several Trimmable Horizontal Stabilizer (THS) support struts at frame (FR) 91 were found cracked at strut body ends.

The THS is supported and articulated at FR 91 by four struts to fix the hinges (Y-bolts) and keep the structural integrity in lateral direction.

Analysis revealed that cracks can reduce ability of the support struts to carry specified tension loads.

This condition, if not detected and corrected, could lead to the loss of all four THS support struts at FR91, which would make the remaining structure unable to carry limit loads, resulting in the loss of Horizontal Tail Plane.

A340-500/600 aeroplanes are not affected by this [EASA] AD as different material is used on THS support struts.

To address this potentially unsafe condition, EASA issued AD 2013-0076 [http://ad.easa.europa.eu/blob/easa_ad_2013_0076_superse ded.pdf/AD_2013-0076_1] to require repetitive special detailed inspections [high frequency eddy current (HFEC) inspections for cracking] of all 8 strut ends of the THS support located at FR91 in the tail cone and, depending on findings, replacement of THS support struts. That [EASA] AD also required, for aeroplanes on which Airbus Modification 203493 had not been embodied in production, or Airbus Service Bulletin (SB) A330-53-3204 or

SB A340-53-4199, as applicable, has not been embodied in service, the installation of a clamping device on each support strut end to stop growth of possible cracks (crack stopper function) in order to secure integrity of the struts.

Since issuance of EASA AD 2013-0076, it has been discovered that several aeroplanes are fitted with another strut configuration (SARMA Strut) [Société Anonyme de Recherche Mécanique Appliquée] than the TAC (Technical Airborne Components Industries) strut, which caused the other strut not to be considered. Consequently, Airbus revised Airbus SB A330-53-3206 and SB A340-53-4208, accordingly in order to add a one-time [HFEC] inspection [for cracking] for SARMA struts and in case of finding to replace it with a TAC strut and thereafter to accomplish repetitive inspections and EASA issued AD 2013-0219 [http://ad.easa.europa.eu/blob/easa_ad_2013_0219_superseded.pdf/AD_2013-0219_1], which is superseded, and required accomplishment of the instructions as specified in the latest revision of each SB, as applicable.

Since issuance of EASA AD 2013-0219, based on the reporting received from operators, it has been determined that repetitive inspections are also to be accomplished for aeroplanes equipped with SARMA strut. Airbus introduced that inspection in the applicable SB at revision 3.

For the reasons described above, this [EASA] AD retains the requirements of EASA AD 2013-0219, which is superseded, and requires accomplishment of repetitive [HFEC] inspective inspection [for cracking] for aeroplanes equipped with SARMA strut.

This [EASA] AD is considered as an interim action, pending the development of a terminating action.

You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket on the Internet at

<http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2014-1043.

Related Service Information

Airbus has issued the following service information:

- Airbus Service Bulletin A330-53-3206, Revision 03, dated February 28, 2014.

This service information describes procedures for inspections for cracking of the strut ends of the THS support located in the airplane tail cone for Model A330 airplanes.

- Airbus Service Bulletin A340-53-4208, Revision 03, dated February 28, 2014.

This service information describes procedures for inspections for cracking of the strut ends of the THS support located in the airplane tail cone for Model A340 airplanes.

The actions described in this service information are intended to correct the unsafe condition identified in the MCAI.

FAA's Determination and Requirements of this Proposed AD

This product has been approved by the aviation authority of another country, and is approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to our bilateral agreement with the State of Design Authority, we have been notified of the unsafe condition described in the MCAI and service information referenced above. We are proposing this AD because we evaluated all pertinent information and determined an unsafe condition exists and is likely to exist or develop on other products of these same type designs.

Differences Between this Proposed AD and the MCAI or Service Information

Although EASA Airworthiness Directive 2014-0068, dated March 18, 2014, Airbus Service Bulletin A330-53-3206, Revision 03, dated February 28, 2014, and Airbus Service Bulletin A340-53-4208, Revision 03, dated February 28, 2014, allow further flight after certain cracks are found during compliance with the proposed action,

paragraph (j)(2) of this proposed AD would require that any cracked THS support strut be replaced with a new or serviceable TAC strut before further flight.

Interim Action

We consider this proposed AD interim action. If final action is later identified, we might consider further rulemaking then.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this proposed AD affects 84 airplanes of U.S. registry.

We also estimate that it would take about 9 work-hours per product to comply with the basic requirements of this proposed AD. The average labor rate is \$85 per work-hour. Based on these figures, we estimate the cost of this proposed AD on U.S. operators to be \$64,260, or \$765 per product.

We have received no definitive data that would enable us to provide cost estimates for the on-condition replacement specified in this proposed AD.

We estimate that any necessary follow-on strut reinforcements would take about 2 work-hours and require parts costing \$5,680, for a cost of \$5,850 per product. We have no way of determining the number of aircraft that might need this action.

According to the manufacturer, some of the costs of this proposed AD may be covered under warranty, thereby reducing the cost impact on affected individuals. We do not control warranty coverage for affected individuals. As a result, we have included all costs in our cost estimate.

Authority for this Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator.

“Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs,” describes in more detail the scope of the Agency’s authority.

We are issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in “Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements.” Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

Regulatory Findings

We determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify this proposed regulation:

1. Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866;
2. Is not a “significant rule” under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979);
3. Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska; and
4. Will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive (AD):

Airbus: Docket No. FAA-2014-1043; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-079-AD.

(a) Comments Due Date

We must receive comments by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to the airplanes identified in paragraphs (c)(1), (c)(2), and (c)(3) of this AD, certificated in any category, all manufacturer serial numbers.

(1) Airbus Model A330-201, -202, -203, -223, -223F, -243, and -243F airplanes.

(2) Airbus Model A330-301, -302, -303, -321, -322, -323, -341, -342, and -343 airplanes.

(3) Airbus Model A340-211, -212, -213, -311, -312, and -313 airplanes.

(d) Subject

Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 53, Fuselage.

(e) Reason

This AD was prompted by reports of cracked support strut body ends at a certain frame location of the trimmable horizontal stabilizer (THS). We are issuing this AD to detect and correct cracked support strut body ends of the THS, which could lead to the loss of all four THS support struts and which would make the remaining structure unable to carry limit loads, resulting in the loss of the horizontal tail plane.

(f) Compliance

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

(g) Definition of Strut Types

For the purpose of this AD, a Société Anonyme de Recherche Mécanique Appliquée (SARMA) strut is a strut on which the diameter of the strut end is lower than 43 millimeters. All other struts are Technical Airborne Components Industries (TAC) struts.

(h) Repetitive Inspections of TAC Strut Ends

At the applicable time specified in paragraph (i) of this AD, do a high frequency eddy current (HFEC) inspection for cracking of all TAC strut ends of the THS support located at frame (FR) 91 in the tail cone, in accordance with the Accomplishment

Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A330-53-3206, Revision 03, dated February 28, 2014; or Airbus Service Bulletin A340-53-4208, Revision 03, dated February 28, 2014; as applicable. Repeat the inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 42 months or 20,000 flight hours, whichever occurs first. For airplanes on which Airbus Modification 203493 has been embodied in production, or Airbus Service Bulletin A330-53-3204 or Airbus Service Bulletin A340-53-4199, as applicable, has been embodied in service, remove the clamp from each strut end before accomplishing the inspections required by this paragraph.

(i) Compliance Times for Paragraphs (h) and (k) of this AD

Do the inspections required by paragraphs (h) and (k) of this AD at the applicable times specified in paragraphs (i)(1), (i)(2), and (i)(3) of this AD.

(1) For Model A330 series airplanes having manufacturer serial numbers 012 through 209 inclusive, and Model A340 series airplanes having manufacturer serial numbers 002 through 210 inclusive: Within 6 months after the effective date of this AD.

(2) For Model A330 series airplanes having manufacturer serial numbers 211 through 422 inclusive, and Model A340 series airplanes having manufacturer serial numbers 212 through 447 inclusive: Within 24 months after the effective date of this AD.

(3) For Model A330 series airplanes having manufacturer serial numbers 423 and subsequent, and Model A340 series airplanes having manufacturer serial numbers 450 through 955 inclusive: Within 36 months after the effective date of this AD or since the first flight of the airplane, whichever occurs later.

(j) Corrective Action for TAC Strut Ends and Installation of Reinforcing Clamps

(1) If, during any inspection required by paragraph (h) of this AD, no cracks are found: Before further flight, reinstall or install, as applicable, reinforcing clamps on the strut ends, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A330-53-3206, Revision 03, dated February 28, 2014; or Airbus Service Bulletin A340-53-4208, Revision 03, dated February 28, 2014.

(2) If, during any inspection required by paragraph (h) of this AD, any crack is found: Before further flight, replace any affected strut with a new or serviceable TAC strut and install reinforcing clamps on the strut end, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A330-53-3206, Revision 03, dated February 28, 2014; or Airbus Service Bulletin A340-53-4208, Revision 03, dated February 28, 2014; as applicable.

(k) Repetitive Inspections of SARMA Strut Ends

At the applicable time specified in paragraph (i) of this AD, do an HFEC inspection for cracking of all SARMA strut ends of the THS support located at FR 91 in the tail cone, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A330-53-3206, Revision 03, dated February 28, 2014; or Airbus Service Bulletin A340-53-4208, Revision 03, dated February 28, 2014; as applicable. Repeat the inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 12 months.

(l) Corrective Action for SARMA Strut Ends

If any crack is found on a strut end during the inspection required by paragraph (k) of this AD: Before further flight, replace any affected SARMA strut with a

new or serviceable TAC strut and install reinforcing clamps on the strut end, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A330-53-3206, Revision 03, dated February 28, 2014; or Airbus Service Bulletin A340-53-4208, Revision 03, dated February 28, 2014; as applicable.

(m) No Terminating Action

Replacement of THS struts on an airplane does not constitute terminating action for the repetitive inspections required by this AD.

(n) No Reporting

Although Airbus Service Bulletin A330-53-3206, Revision 03, dated February 28, 2014, and Airbus Service Bulletin A340-53-4208, Revision 03, dated February 28, 2014, specify to submit certain information to the manufacturer, this AD does not include that requirement.

(o) Credit for Previous Actions

This paragraph provides credit for actions required by paragraphs (g) through (k) of this AD, if those actions were performed before the effective date of this AD using any of the service information identified in paragraphs (n)(1) through (n)(6) of this AD. This service information is not incorporated by reference in this AD.

- (1) Airbus Service Bulletin A330-53-3206, dated February 7, 2013.
- (2) Airbus Service Bulletin A330-53-3206, Revision 01, dated June 10, 2013.
- (3) Airbus Service Bulletin A330-53-3206, Revision 02, dated August 8, 2013.
- (4) Airbus Service Bulletin A340-53-4208, dated February 7, 2013.
- (5) Airbus Service Bulletin A340-53-4208, Revision 01, dated June 10, 2013.

(6) Airbus Service Bulletin A340-53-4208, Revision 02, dated August 8, 2013.

(p) Other FAA AD Provisions

The following provisions also apply to this AD:

(1) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs): The Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the International Branch, send it to ATTN: Vladimir Ulyanov, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; telephone 425-227-1138; fax 425-227-1149. Information may be emailed to: 9-ANM-116-AMOC-REQUESTS@faa.gov. Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office. The AMOC approval letter must specifically reference this AD.

(2) Contacting the Manufacturer: For any requirement in this AD to obtain corrective actions from a manufacturer, the action must be accomplished using a method approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA; or the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA); or Airbus's EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA). If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(q) Related Information

(1) Refer to Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information (MCAI) EASA Airworthiness Directive 2014-0068, dated March 18, 2014, for related information. This MCAI may be found in the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2014-1043.

(2) For service information identified in this AD, contact Airbus SAS, Airworthiness Office – EAL, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax +33 5 61 93 45 80; email airworthiness.A330-A340@airbus.com; Internet <http://www.airbus.com>. You may view this service information at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 425-227-1221. Issued in Renton, Washington, on January 11, 2015.

Jeffrey E. Duvon,
Manager,
Transport Airplane Directorate,
Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 2015-00993 Filed 01/22/2015 at 8:45 am; Publication Date: 01/23/2015]